

Forming Census Subcommittees

The Maricopa Association of Governments has assisted with numerous decennial censuses and with the mid-decade censuses in 1985 and 1995. Experience has taught us that organized outreach efforts can help inform the public about the importance of participating in the census and achieve a more successful count. Although this is the first time we will be conducting a Census Survey, we believe that extensive outreach will still be beneficial in achieving a successful count.

One method for organized outreach that has proven successful is to form subcommittees to develop strategies and materials designed to reach specific target groups. The following subcommittees are based on a model developed by the City of Phoenix Complete Count Committee that has been used successfully in several recent census efforts. Individual jurisdictions may want to form their own Complete Count Committee with similar subcommittees, or perhaps create other types of subcommittees based on their unique communities or demographics. For example, if a community has a large elderly population, a subcommittee targeting seniors may be appropriate. But here are a few general ideas to help get you started.

Census Survey Complete Count Subcommittees

- Business
- Communities of Faith
- Media
- Minority Outreach
- Neighborhoods/Schools

Business Subcommittee

Objectives

- Develop a program to reach all private sector businesses.
- Inform them and their employees / customers of the importance of getting an accurate count.

Potential Members

- Top employers with large employee base.
- Business leaders.
- Labor unions.
- Chambers of Commerce.
- City representatives on business organizations (East Valley Partnership, WESTMARC, Rotary, Soroptomist, Lion's Clubs, etc.)

Sample Tactics

- Paycheck stuffers.
- Posters in employee lunchrooms.
- Donations of resources such as printing, mail services.
- Small/large group presentations.
- Messaging/Speaker's Bureaus.

Media Subcommittee

Objectives

- Develop a localized media campaign to reach residents.
- Emphasis on working with local/community newspapers.

Potential Members

- Editors of community newspapers.
- Channel 11 station managers.
- Reporters.
- Advertising heads.
- City PIO or communication managers.

Sample Tactics

- Develop and disseminate key messages.
- Development of public service announcements.
- Local press conferences or publicity events.
- Celebrity spokespersons.
- Cinema slides.
- News coverage.
- Partnering/advertising opportunities at community centers, grocery stores, libraries, restaurants, swap meets.

Neighborhoods/Schools Subcommittee

Objectives

- Develop a program to reach neighborhoods and schools.
- Get every neighborhood/community associations involved in the Census and develop a master calendar of outreach events.
- Provide information to parents and children through the schools.

Potential Members

- Neighborhood/Homeowners associations.
- Community advocates.
- Block Watch leaders.
- School District administrators.
- Teachers.
- Apartment managers.
- Parent/Teacher Organizations (PTAs or PTOs).
- Law enforcement representatives.
- Fire department representatives.
- City Neighborhood Services representatives.

Sample Tactics

- Flyers/announcements sent home with schoolchildren.
- School contests or fun events.
- Neighborhood meetings.
- Presentations at Block Watch/HOA Board meetings.
- Neighborhood e-mail lists or newsletters.

Minority Outreach

Objectives

- Assist the Census Bureau with recruitment of Census workers and identifying neighborhood locations for question-and-answer sites.
- Focus on traditionally undercounted minority populations with special emphasis on undocumented immigrants.
- Provide contact and networking opportunities to minority communities.
- Educate minority residents about the significance and confidentiality of the Census.

Potential Members

- Minority Chambers of Commerce (Hispanic, African-American, Asian American, Native American).
- Minority groups such as Chicanos Por La Causa, Latino Institute, Valle Del Sol, the Arizona Hispanic Community Forum, Urban League.
- Local minority leaders.
- Minority advocates.
- Minority business owners or union representatives.

Sample Tactics

- Spanish media interviews.
- Partnerships/advertising opportunities with local minority businesses such as ethnic restaurants, barber shops, grocery stores, swap meets, taxi cabs, newspapers, any cultural hot spots, day labor centers, etc. (working with media committee).
- Speakers Bureau of trusted minority leaders.
- Small group presentations.
- Collateral materials in Spanish or other languages.
- Latino/African American celebrities to host events or tape PSAs.

Communities of Faith

Objectives

- Identify ways to involve the religious community.
- Encourage active participation by the community's religious organizations.
- Special emphasis on many inner city places of worship.

Potential Members

- Leaders representing all faiths, including Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim and Islamic.
- Catholic diocese.
- Ecumenical council.
- Clergy.
- Religious organizations.

Tactics

- Information posted in church bulletins, announcements, newsletters or bulletin boards.
- Presentations to congregations.
- Member-tell-a-friend campaign.

ATTACHMENT ONE

- Speaker's Bureau made up of trusted faith leaders such as priests, pastors, rabbis, Imams, monks.
- Church-related events.

Committee Tips

- Keep your committee to a manageable size -- don't let it get too unwieldy to be productive.
- Elect a chair to develop agendas, run the meetings, and be responsible for committee communications.
- Develop a strategic plan, identifying target audiences, goals, and strategies. Include a timeline and budget.
- Take notes or minutes and highlight action items. Review at the following meeting to determine progress.
- Determine whether formal votes will be taken and whether a quorum is needed to make decisions.
- Develop mail lists/contact lists of members and target audiences.
- Schedule meetings at regular intervals. Publish a list of meeting dates early on so members can get it on their busy calendars.
- Keep a master calendar of events and activities.
- Determine messages and define what your three key messages will be and how they will be disseminated. Every member of the committee should know what the key messages are and repeat them, repeat them, repeat them.
- Have fun!

Other Tips For Ensuring a Successful Count

- Identify hard-to-enumerate areas.
- Demographic characteristics and diversity maps targeting areas that had below average response rates in 2000.
- Factors may include;
 - Seasonal residents.
 - High growth areas.
 - High percentage of rental housing.
 - Linguistic isolation.